

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) A method for managing the use of electronic content at a user's computing device, the method including:

executing an application program on the user's computing device, the application program being capable of rendering electronic content, the application program having at least a first digital certificate associated therewith, wherein the first digital certificate is generated by a first entity that comprises an association of one or more content providers, and the first digital certificate is associated with the application program if the application program meets certain predefined criteria set by the association;

requesting the application program to render a piece of electronic content, the piece of electronic content having at least a second digital certificate associated therewith, and the piece of electronic content further having associated therewith at least one electronic rule, the at least one electronic rule including data specifying one or more conditions associated with rendering the piece of electronic content, the one or more conditions including a condition that the piece of electronic content may be rendered by an application program having the first digital certificate associated therewith, wherein the piece of electronic content comprises a prescription, and in which the first entity associates the first digital certificate with the application program if it is determined that the application program will handle the prescription with at least a predefined level of security;

verifying the association of the second digital certificate with the piece of electronic content, wherein the second digital certificate is generated by a second entity different from the first entity and the second entity associates the second digital certificate with the prescription if the prescription originated from a certified physician identified by a third digital certificate issued by a third entity different from the first and second entities, and determines that a prescription originated from a certified physician by checking for the presence of the third digital certificate issued by the third entity, wherein the application program is further associated with a fourth digital certificate, the fourth digital certificate attesting to a determination having been made by a fourth entity that the application program possesses a predefined functionality, which includes functionality that ensures that the application program verifies the association of the second digital certificate with the piece of electronic content before rendering the piece of electronic content;

verifying the association between the application and the fourth digital certificate;

using a rights management program running on the user's computing device to ~~examin~~-examine the data included in the at least one electronic rule and to determine that the piece of electronic content may be rendered by an application program having the first digital certificate associated therewith;

verifying the association of the first digital certificate with the application program using the rights management program; and

rendering the piece of electronic content using the application program.

2. (Cancelled)

3. (Cancelled)

4. (Currently Amended) The [[A]] method ~~as in~~ of claim 3 1, in which the second entity comprises an entity concerned with controlling the nature of the electronic content that is rendered by the application program, and the second digital certificate is associated with the piece of electronic content if the piece of electronic content meets certain predefined standards.

5. (Cancelled)

6. (Cancelled)

7. (Currently Amended) The [[A]] method ~~as in~~ of claim 6 1, in which the predefined level of security includes a requirement that the application verify that an application user has a predefined certificate before rendering the prescription.

8. (Currently Amended) The [[A]] method ~~as in~~ of claim 7, in which the predefined certificate indicates that the application user is a licensed pharmacist.

9. (Currently Amended) The [[A]] method ~~as in~~ of claim 7, in which a certified pharmacist is identified by a digital certificate issued by [[a]] the third entity ~~different from the first and second entities.~~

10. (Cancelled)

11. (Cancelled)

12. (Cancelled)

13. (Cancelled)

14. (Cancelled)

15. (Cancelled)

16. (Currently Amended) The [[A]] method ~~as in~~ of claim 1, in which the step of verifying the association of the second digital certificate with the piece of electronic content is performed during or after the step of verifying the association of the first digital certificate with the application program.

17. (Currently Amended) The [[A]] method ~~as in~~ of claim 1, in which the step of verifying the association of the first digital certificate with the application program includes computing a hash of at least part of the application program and comparing the hash to a value contained in the digital certificate.

18. (Currently Amended) The [[A]] method ~~as in~~ of claim 1, further including:
decrypted a secure container containing the piece of electronic content
and the at least one electronic rule; and
retrieving the at least one electronic rule from the secure container.

19. (Cancelled)

20. (Cancelled)